



WOODBURN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Noise infractions Under City of Woodburn Ordinance 2312

The City of Woodburn has an ordinance to regulate noise. The current ordinance was approved and passed by the City Council in April 2002 in order to be in compliance with the Oregon and US Constitutions and case law.

To communicate the ordinance to the entire community, and taking into consideration the diversity among our population, the city has translated Ordinance 2312 into Spanish.

Ordinance 2312 outlines the way to regulate, and restrict the production of noise.

In residential zones there have been problems with family events. Some use mariachis and live bands or DJ's which can violate the noise ordinance. It is not the city's goal to issue citations. On the contrary, the city's goal is to have neighborhoods free of too much noise.

To inform residents and help them comply with the city noise regulations, reference copies of ordinance 2312 is available at the Police Department in English and Spanish.

Now, we will show you how we are affected by noise pollution.

What is noise?

Any sound that interrupts our activities, conversations, or even rest. We know that a sound could be pleasant for some but painful for others.

How does the human ear work?

The ability to hear starts with the external ear. The waves and vibrations received are

transmitted then to the internal ear using the auditory canal in order to get to the eardrum. From the eardrum, it goes to the ossicles where the sound is amplified. After that, using waves, it is sent to the cochlea. The next step is the generation of nerve impulses that travel up to the brain where those impulses are transformed into noise.

Can we measure noise?

To measure the intensity of a sound, we use decibels. They are created when the waves of the sound hit against the ear. The decibels scale is logarithmic, just like the Richter scale (used to measure earthquakes intensity) and is measured with an A weighted Decibel meter.

Dangerous noise

A dangerous noise is an unwanted noise that can damage our hearing capacity. As a guideline: If it is necessary for you to raise your voice in order to maintain a conversation, then you have a noise problem.

If you are continuously around excessive noise, your hearing capacity can be damaged. The tiny hair cells inside the cochlea, which generate the nerve impulses, can be damaged or even destroyed when they work more than usual. That is exactly what happens when you are exposed to such areas.

Even though the loss of hair cells of the cochlea may be minimal, the continuous exposure to dangerous noise has an accumulative effect and it could be substantial.

The loss of hearing capacity could be permanent. If these tiny microscopic structures are damaged, there is not yet a process to restore the hair cells.

Which are the most detrimental noises for the human ear?

The sharp noises are more dangerous than bass sound noises, short and strong noises like using a hammer or explosions are also dangerous.

When does a noise damage the ear?

If a noise interrupts your normal conversation, it becomes dangerous, also if it hurts your ears or your ears hum.

Does the noise have secondary effects besides the loss of hearing?

Yes; it increases blood pressure, and makes the heart's job harder.

Excessive noise creates stress, makes it hard to concentrate, and can lead to violence.

Can you recover lost hearing?

No, lamentably the internal ear cells once destroyed do not grow back. For that reason it is necessary to always take care of them.

Which is the ear part that suffers the most because of noise?

First of all, the parts of the ear are:

External ear (the ear and the auditory canal), the middle ear (cochlea and 3 small bones) and the internal ear. The internal ear is like a snail shell; inside it has tiny hair cells (500 of them can be accommodated in a millimeter). They are mainly responsible for our hearing capacity.

Because they are so tiny, they are delicate and easy to destroy by noise.

Why is there a noise ordinance at all?

Sound is part of life and each person makes many types of sound during the course of a day. Therefore in order for all people to live together in a peaceful community there must be some basic level of regulation and control of sound.

What kinds of sounds are prohibited?

Any noise that exceeds the decibel ratings listed below, or that is by its very nature illegal as stated in Section 6B of the ordinance. Some examples of these are car alarms sounding for more than 20 minutes, repairing or testing a vehicle engine that is audible after 9:00 PM, the keeping of animals which, by loud and frequent or continued noise disturbs neighbors.

Can my Dad organize a party in our house with a Mariachi band?

What matters here, is not if he can or not, but to remember that in a residential zone you can not exceed 55 decibels using the A-weighted network at any time between 9:00 pm and 7:00 am of the following day, this is very hard to do, and there are no permits which allow exceeding the decibel limits. Is important to understand it is not necessary to have a neighbor complain in order to get a citation. A police officer who perceives a loud noise will measure it. If there is a violation to the noise ordinance, he might issue a citation.

Can I have a live band or DJ at my outside party?

Amplified sound that is created outside of a vehicle or a building is not allowed without a permit in The City of Woodburn, and permits are not allowed to be granted in residential areas.

My mom was told that if we organize a party at our home and a police officer comes to our place he will only give us a warning, but not a ticket at first. Is that true?

Not necessarily. The officer can issue a citation at his first visit to a person who violates or permits violation of the law.

Is it true that we can have a party at one of the City parks?

Yes, it is possible, but you will need to request the permit at least 14 days in advance from the Parks and Recreation Department.

City Zoning Designation	Time	Max Decibel Level
Residential	7:00AM to 9:00PM	55 DBA
Residential	9:00PM to 7:00AM	65 DBA
Non-Residential	7:00AM to 9:00PM	60DBA
Non-Residential	9:00PM to 7:00AM	75DBA